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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/542,684	07/19/2005	John Colucci	MC065YP	9330
210	7590	05/09/2007	EXAMINER	
MERCK AND CO., INC P O BOX 2000 RAHWAY, NJ 07065-0907				FREISTEIN, ANDREW B
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1626				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
05/09/2007		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/542,684	COLUCCI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Andrew B. Freistein	1626	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 July 2005.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) 1-21 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement
Paper No(s)/Mail Date

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)

Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-21 are currently pending in the instant application.

Priority

This application is a 371 of PCT/CA04/00152, filed 02/05/2004, which claims the benefit of US Provisional Application No. 60/445,560, filed 02/07/2003.

Election/Restrictions

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

Lack of Unity Requirement

Claims 1-21 are drawn to more than one inventive concept (as defined by PCT Rule 13), and accordingly, a restriction is required according to the provision of PCT Rule 13.2.

PCT Rule 13.2 states that the international application shall relate to one invention only or to a group of inventions so linked as to form a single general inventive concept (requirement of unity of invention).

PCT Rule 13.2 states unity of invention referred to in Rule 13.1 shall be fulfilled only when there is a technical relationship among those inventions involving one or more of the same or corresponding special technical features.

Annex B, Part 1 (b), provides that “special technical features” mean those technical features, which, as a whole, define a contribution over the prior art.

Annex B, Part 1 (e), provides combinations of different categories of claims and states:

"The method for determining unity of invention under Rule 13 shall be construed as permitting, in particular, the inclusion of any one of the following combinations of claims of different categories in the same international application:

- (i) in addition to an independent claim for a given product, an independent claims for a process specially adapted for the manufacture of the said product, and an independent claim for use of the said product, or
- (ii) in addition to an independent claim for a given process, an independent claim for an apparatus or means specially designed for carrying out the said process, or
- (iii) in addition to an independent claim for a given product, and independent claim for a process specially adapted for the manufacture of the said product, and an independent claim for an apparatus or means specially designed for carrying out the said process,..."

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions, which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in response to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I: Claims 1-8, 18 and 19, drawn to a compound of Formula I.

Group II: Claims 9-11, drawn to a compound of Formula II.

Group III: Claim 12, drawn to a method for detecting active caspase-3 in cells or tissues comprising contacting a cell or tissue with a compound of formula I.

Group IV: Claim 13, drawn to a method for detecting active caspase-3 in cells or tissues comprising contacting a cell or tissue with a compound of formula II.

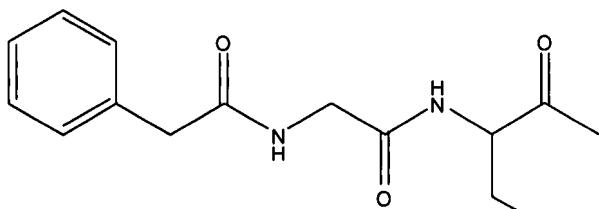
Group V: Claims 14 and 15, drawn to a method for determining the caspase-3 active site occupancy of a sample reversible caspase-3 inhibitor in an animal model.

Group VI: Claim 16, drawn to a kit for detecting active caspase-3 in cells or tissues comprising a compound of formula I.

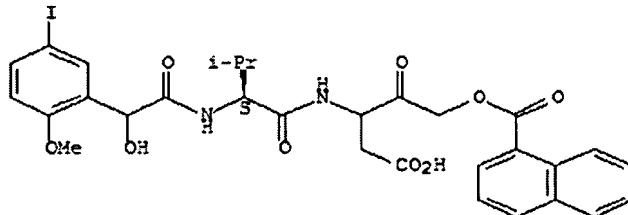
Group VII: Claims 20 and 21, drawn to the use of a compound of any one of claims 1-11, 18 or 19.

The inventions listed as Groups I-VII do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: they do not share the same structural element(s) that define the “special technical feature” necessary to specify a contribution over the prior art.

The structural moiety common to Groups I-VII is



CO_2H , which is known in the art. See US Pat. No.



6,525,025, which discloses the species

(col. 84, lines 30-37). Therefore, claims 1-21 cannot be said to be the special technical feature that makes a contribution over the prior art. All other substituents differ structurally from one another. Thus, these claims lack the corresponding special technical feature(s) necessary to link them together to fulfill the Unity of Invention requirement.

The inventions of Groups I-VII are distinct, each from the other, because they differ in structure and/or element so as to be patently distinct and a prior art reference

anticipating by one of the groups would not render obvious the other groups under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Because the claims do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 and lack the same or corresponding special technical features, the claims lack unity of invention and should be limited to a single product, a single process for the manufacture of said product, and a single method of use of said product.

Furthermore, with respect to Groups I-VII, even if unity of invention under 37 CFR 1.475(a) is not lacking, under 37 CFR 1.475(b) a national stage application containing claims to different categories of invention will be considered to have unity of invention if the claims are drawn only to one of the following combinations:

- (1) A product and a process specially adapted for the manufacture of said product; or
- (2) A product and process of use of said product; or
- (3) A product, a process specially adapted for the manufacture of the said product, and a use of the said product; or
- (4) A process and an apparatus or means specially designed for carrying out the said process; or
- (5) A product, a process specially adapted for the manufacture of the said product, and an apparatus or means specially designed for carrying out the said process.

Moreover, according to 37 CFR 1.475(c),

If an application contains claims to more or less than one of the combinations of categories of invention set forth in paragraph (b), unity of invention might not be present.

In the instant case the claims are drawn to more than one product, process, and method of use. According to 37 CFR 1.475(e),

Art Unit: 1626

The determination whether a group of inventions is so linked as to form a single general inventive concept shall be made without regard to whether the inventions are claimed in separate claims or as alternatives within a single claim.

As a result, the claims lack unity of invention and applicant is required to elect a single invention.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

Telephone Inquiry

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew B. Freistein whose telephone number is (571) 272-8515. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 am - 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph M^cKane can be reached on (571) 272-0699. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

KAMAL A. SAEED, PH.D.
PRIMARY EXAMINER

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Date: May 1, 2007